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News Release



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Monitoring Plan for Delisted Tinian Monarch Released for Review

A draft post-delisting monitoring plan for the Tinian monarch, a forest bird endemic to the island of Tinian, was released today for public review and comment. This detailed plan, required by the Endangered Species Act, provides guidance to monitor the status of the species for no fewer than five years. The purpose of the plan is to verify that a species delisted due to recovery remains secure from risk of extinction after it has been removed from the protections of the Act.

On September 21, 2004, the Tinian monarch was removed from the list of threatened and endangered species based on a thorough review of all available information, which indicates that this species has increased in number or is stable and that the primary listing factor, loss of habitat, is no longer a major threat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed the plan in cooperation with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services, and the U.S. Navy.

These governmental agencies will work together on the island of Tinian to conduct regular field surveys of the distribution and abundance of the monarch, regular field surveys for brown treesnakes, and tracking of land use and development.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can initiate procedures to re-list the monarch, including, if appropriate, emergency listing if data from this monitoring effort or from some other source indicates that the bird is experiencing significant declines in abundance or distribution, that its survival or territory occupancy are declining significantly, or that it requires protective status under the Act for some other reason. The species remains protected under Commonwealth laws.

The Tinian monarch, or Chuchurican Tinian in Chamorro, is a small forest bird found only on the island of Tinian in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This small

six-inch bird is a member of the monarch flycatcher family, and has a light reddish chest and neck, olive brown back, dark brown wings and tail, white wing bars, white rump, and a white-tipped tail. Tinian monarchs forage and breed over much of the island in both the non-native tangantangan and native limestone forests.

The Tinian monarch was originally listed as an endangered species on June 2, 1970, because it was believed that its populations were at very low numbers. The primary threat to the species was severe habitat loss due to clearing of land for cattle grazing and sugarcane farming prior to World War II and extensive construction and military campaigns during the war. As the tangantangan forests have grown back to replace the native forests, the monarch has thrived. A survey of the monarch population in 1982 found approximately 37,000 birds, and the species was subsequently downlisted to threatened. A survey conducted in 1996 indicated that the population had increased to approximately 56,000 birds over the intervening 14-year period.

The public comment period for this post-delisting monitoring plan is 30 days. Copies of the *Federal Register* notice and the draft plan may be downloaded from our Endangered Species Program's national web page at <http://endangered.fws.gov/> and the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife website at <http://pacificislands.fws.gov>. Copies are also available by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Honolulu at 808 792 9400.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.